ON KEEPING A HOUSE IN REPAIR.

Every person who occupies a house, either on lease, or which is his own property, must necessarily be aware that the annual expenses of repairs are very considerable; so much so indeed, that, in London and its suburbs, it will invariably be found much cheaper to live in unfurnished lodgings, at a much higher rent than would be paid for the same number of rooms in a house. The case is different in Edinburgh and Paris, and in most of the cities of the Continent; because there the houses have common staircases, and each floor is let out on lease to one or two separate families. The expenses of repairs are in a great measure unavoidable; but some of them may be diminished by attending rigidly to the following rule, which is founded on the principle of prevention rather than cure.

Agree with each of the different tradesmen who are employed to do repairs or make additions to a house, such as the carpenter and joiner, the bricklayer and slater, the painter, plumber and glazier, the smith and bell-hanger, and the locksmith and ironmonger, to look over every part of the house quarterly or half-yearly, on a certain fixed day; and either to repair or to report on what is necessary to be done the day following.

In small houses, the carpenter alone will be sufficient to point out what is wanting, and the other tradesmen need only be called in if wanted; but in very large establishments all the tradesmen mentioned, and even some others, may be necessary. The carpenter, in small houses, will perform the part of the locksmith in oiling all the locks and hinges; and he will also examine the roof, the boarded floors, the fittings-up, such as the window-blinds, curtains, &c., and in general all that, strictly speaking, belongs to the joiner and cabinet-maker. The plumber and glazier will attend to cracked or broken glass, and to every thing connected with lead gutters, painting, traps for smells, &c.

The annual expenses of houses in London and its environs are greatly increased by the frequency with which they are painted, papered, or coloured. These repeated operations are not only expensive, but they destroy all the sharpness of architectural ornament, whilst they are quite unnecessary as a preservative against decay. On examining the wooden staircases in some of the old houses in London, the sharp workmanship of the richly carved rails and balusters will be found to be entirely destroyed, on account of the several coats of paint which have been laid on at regular intervals of three or six years. The ornaments on the ceilings of these houses are equally obliterated by repeated coatings of whitewash. The excuse offered for this frequent painting and whitewashing is the dirt which attaches to the walls and ceilings of London houses, in consequence of the soot continually floating in the atmosphere; but a much better mode, both for the beauty of the rooms and the pocket of the occupier, and even for cleanliness, would be to wash all the work painted in oil with flannels dipped in warm water; and carefully to wipe with a dry cloth, and afterwards to rub over with a piece of bread, the paper, if not adapted for washing, and the ceilings. To lessen the trouble of reaching the upper part of lofty rooms, the cloth for wiping the paper may be put on the extremity of a brush attached to a long handle, and a contrivance might easily be devised for substituting a piece of bread, or a large piece of India-rubber, for the brush. In general, it will be found the best economy to have the ceilings of the living-rooms painted in oil, and to have the walls either painted, or covered with what is called washing-paper, the colours of which, being in oil, admit freely of being washed with flannel or sponge and water.

The Breakwater Lighthouse.—On Monday fortnight the fourth story of this building was completed, the centre stone of the ceiling of that portion of the edifice having been then put in. The air chamber only has now to be put up, when the entire building will be ready for the reception of the lantern, which is now being made in London. The part of the tower now up is 46 feet above the level of high water, and when finished will be 56 feet in height without the lantern.—*Plymouth Times.*

ASSESSED TAXES CASES.

Determined by the Judges on Appeal.

(No. 1486.)—Windows—Cottage not assessed in 1834-5, nor occupied by appellant.

In 1834-5, a cottage was not assessed to the window duty, as it had not seven windows. In 1838 appellant came to reside in it, and opened some new windows. Held, that appellant not being the occupier in 1834-5, could not claim exemption from the duty in 1840, even though the cottage was not assessed at all in 1834-5.

On the 18th of September, 1840, (48 Geo. 3, c. 55, sch. A);—Mr. Gude appealed before the commissioners of assessed taxes for the division of Godley, in the county of Surrey, against an assessment made upon him for window duty. Mr. Gude alleged that in the repairs made by him in 1838, of an old cottage belonging to him at Chobham, he had opened some additional windows upon the faith of the Act of 4 & 5 Will. 4, c. 54, s. 7, and that he was not liable to assessment, as the cottage had not before the repairs in 1838 been assessed to the window duty, by reason of its not having more than seven windows. Mr. Hall, the surveyor of taxes, on behalf of the crown, contended that as Mr. Gude did not reside in the cottage previous to the 5th of April, 1838 (which Mr. Gude admitted he did not), he could not avail himself of the exemptions in the Act, even if the cottage had not been charged to the window duty prior to the 5th of April, 1835, by reason of its not having seven windows. Mr. Gude contended that he not having been assessed, nor the cottage, nor the tenant by whom the cottage was then occupied, by reason of its not having seven windows, for the year ending the 5th day of April, 1835, he was within the exemption.

The commissioners present *confirmed the charge* on Mr. Gude, who being dissatisfied with their decision, demanded a case for the judges' opinion, which is accordingly stated.

William Adams.
Peter Horrocks.

18th May, 1841.—We are of opinion that the determination of the Commissioners is right.

J. Patteson. T. Coltman. W. Wightman.
—*Justice of the Peace.*

Correspondence.

church architecture.

Sir,—In your last number of The Builder I observed a design for a church in the classic style.

Setting aside prejudice, I will, with your permission, offer a few remarks upon church architecture generally, also upon the design just alluded to by way of illustration.

The classic style, to use a wide and vague term, appears to me to be totally inapplicable to ecclesiastical architecture; in the first place, because it is not calculated to convey the idea on first view of the purpose to which the building is appropriated, a circumstance which, though in some cases it cannot be carried to that extent as in others, yet ought in all to demand the architect's particular attention; and in the second place, uniformity of design exteriorly, in a classic building, is so strictly to be studied, that the internal arrangement is too frequently cramped in order to carry it out.

Blind adherence to conventionalities, either in the classic or pointed styles, I will not here touch upon, for there are too many who preach this doctrine but do not disentangle themselves from its clutches; and again, the majority of those sufficiently capable to judge the matter, would immediately prognosticate the downfal of art, were any one found bold enough to strike out from the beaten path; and indeed the effect produced by such a course, would, being novel, and not in accordance with present practice, prove unfavourable, although to a certain extent it might be true that all the decorations were made subservient to construction, as was the practice of the ancients and the Gothic architects of the middle ages, and alluded to by two architectural professors of late years, of a different school,—Chambers and Pugin.

The application of stucco by the moderns not only in their church architecture, but also other edifices, has, undoubtedly, in a greater measure than any other circumstance, tended to bring architecture into comparative insignificance, and the impracticability of using the material it is intended to represent in such situations as one frequently sees it, is to an experienced eye the very cause of its dislike.

It is to be sincerely hoped that, for ecclesiastical purposes at least, it will be entirely abandoned, and that the *real material*—if stone be too expensive, brick—be made to shew itself as it ought, and although a material not quite reconcilable to one's feelings, yet far preferable to any make-belief.

Perhaps I am somewhat digressing, but I will proceed to endeavour to prove the assertion with which I set out, taking for granted that the architecture of the ancients and that of the middle ages are to be our models.

From the general appearance of your correspondent's design, the notion would not be conveyed to one's mind, that it was an ecclesiastical building; the campanile at the west end would be the only feature to lead one to imagine that it was intended for a sacred edifice; the lights or windows are so numerous, and occupying so much of the area of the wall, that instead of the "dim religious light," so essential to an ecclesiastical structure, it would be quite the reverse, unless stained glass were introduced, which would be an expensive way of overcoming a difficulty. The inclination of the roof is here obliged to follow the angle of the ancients, in whose climate a steeper pitch would have been unnecessary; thus adapting, as did the mediæval architects in this country, their architecture to the climate they had to encounter; and this argument is by means new, having been urged by Pugin and other writers; but I feel it cannot be too repeatedly brought into notice.

The urns, which figure in the balustrade, are truly anti-Christian, and refer us to Heathenish rites of two thousand years since, instead of reminding us of the Christian times in which we now happily exist.

On the other hand, how admirably expressive of its purpose is a church in the pointed style, designed in a true feeling: the very plan is a cross; the chancel is not merely a projection of a few feet, but standing out boldly. The tower and spire, springing probably from the intersection of the nave, transepts, and chancel, rise to a majestic height towering to the sky. The high-pitched roof, the mullioned windows, filled with elaborate and beautifully-twisting tracery of a significant meaning, the crocketed pinnacles and buttresses, all admirably tell their purpose; and there is throughout that exalted and upward tendency, so peculiarly expressive, and which cannot be arrived at in any other style. Much more might be said, and of the interior, perhaps, it may be now sufficient to remark, that every part tends to impress the beholder with those sublime feelings so necessary in a sacred edifice.

Some there are who assert that, to the exclusion of all other styles, the pointed is the only fit one for buildings of every denomination. To this I must disagree, for there are many structures in which Greek or Roman architecture may be made to speak its purpose much better than the pointed, and are also better adapted from local circumstances.

The day is not far distant when it is to be hoped that true feelings for ecclesiastical architecture will prevail, and architects will alone for such purposes turn their eyes for examples to the glorious piles of York, Salisbury, Canterbury, Winchester, &c. &c., upon which to base their future designs.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
J. W.

Oxon, September 21.

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sir james thornhill.

Sir,—In looking over some back numbers of The Builder, I found a brief notice of Sir James Thornhill of one of them, with an engraved fac-simile of his autograph. Some little time since, having occasion to go down to Greenwich on business connected with the works of the Hospital, I was shewn into what is called the Committee-room of the Office of Works, where, much to my surprise, and no less gratification, I saw a number of original designs and drawings both by Sir James Thornhill and Benjamin West hung round the room, all well preserved in good substantial frames and glasses, in which state I trust they will be kept for many a long year yet to come, as they are worthy of preserving, although they are but sketches.

Doubtless many, if not most, of your architectural readers must have been to the beautiful chapel of the College, and have noticed the fine elaborate carving of the pulpit, niches, and other parts of that superb little edifice: the sketches by West, hung up in the Committee-room above mentioned, are nothing more or less than the *original designs* by himself for the various carvings there, as well as one or two others for the statues, which are placed in different parts of the building, two of which I only now remember to have seen in the vestibule of the chapel.

There is also the original design of the great window in the chapel, by West, which, however, I am sorry to say, is quite unworthy both of him and the place in which it so fearfully obtrudes. The subject is the Wreck of Saint Paul, but the whole picture is so crowded with figures, jumbled as it were one on another, that it is really difficult to trace the action of the design; and the colouring is decidedly not by any means of the first order; in fact, West's reputation would not suffer the least injury if this specimen of his pencil was removed from its present commanding position, for which it is quite unsuited. In my estimation, the gem of

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